

McCallum Brother's (MBL's) proposals for sand extraction are to occur within the application area that is located centrally within Northland's Te Ākau Bream Bay, located at least 4.7 km offshore in water depths of 20-30 m (Figure 1). The proposed sand extraction would occur 'inside' a series of anchorages that already serve vessels waiting to load and unload goods at Northport and the Channel Infrastructure NZ facilities at Marsden Point, while ships and other vessels in transit – in and out of Whangārei Harbour – are also a feature of Te Ākau Bream Bay's current maritime environment. Even so, the proposed extraction site remains exposed to the settlements of Ruakākā, Waipū (linked to Waipū Cove) and Langs Beach, and a wide range of areas subject to recreational activities – from Home Point to the Ruakākā, Uretiti, Waipū Cove and Langs Beach beachfronts. The northern margins of the Bay are also fringed by Outstanding Natural Landscapes and Features concentrated around the mouth of Whangārei Harbour and Whangārei Heads, while areas of significance to local iwi and hapū are found near Poupouwhenua Marsden Point, the Ruakākā River mouth and Uretiti Beach – among others.

The landscape and natural character effects of the proposed sand extraction activities on these various receiving environments and audiences have been assessed in relation to the three core dimensions of both landscape and natural character:

- Biophysical values;
- Perceptual – experiential values; and
- Associative or community- based values and connections.

This assessment is consistent with the NZILA Landscape Assessment Guidelines document – Te Tangi a te Manu – together with recent case law, the NZ Coastal Policy Statement (2010) and relevant statutory documents.

Much of this assessment inevitably focuses on the perceptual-experiential components of both landscape and natural character, drawing on site visits around the margins of Te Ākau Bream Bay and use of photos (below) of the *William Fraser* taken from representative vantage points on that coastline: at Poupouwhenua Marsden Point (Mair Road) (Figure 2 & 4) , near the Ruakākā Surf Life Saving Club (Figure 3 & 5), on Uretiti Beach (Figure 6 & 8), and at Waipū Cove (Figure 7 & 9). All four locations are subject to significant public recreation, two are near settlements and two are near locations of significance to local hapū, notably including the Te Tahuna Tohora Whale Burial Sanctuary behind Uretiti Beach.

Although the *William Fraser* would be visible for up to 3.5 hour per day (an average of 6% of the time initially, and up to 11% with full extraction) within Te Ākau Bream Bay, a number of factors ultimately limit its visual presence and impact on both the landscape and natural character values of the local coastline. These include:

- a) The significant viewing distance to the *William Fraser* vessel and its limited visibility relative to most shoreline locations;
- b) The containment of the plume associated with sand extraction and sand filtration to the confines of the undersea area beneath and immediately around the vessel;
- c) The close correlation between the proposed sand extraction site and the main navigation channel in and out of Whangārei Harbour, as well as with the ship anchoring points off Te Ākau Bream Bay;
- d) The existing commercial and shipping activity that is already present in the embayment.

- e) The close visual similarities between the *William Fraser* within the extraction area and working vessels further out to sea – either entering and departing Whangārei Harbour, or at anchor;
- f) The limited hours of extraction activity proposed for each day (3 - 4 days per week at 150,000 m³ and 5-6 days a week for 250,000 m³; and
- g) The modified nature of most of Te Ākau Bream Bay's coastal margins, which both frame and contextualise views of its sea area.

As a result, the effects identified in relation to Te Ākau Bream Bay's perceptual-experiential values are identified as being of a **very low to low** order in relation to both landscape and natural character.

Assessments undertaken by Tonkin and Taylor, Metocean Solutions, Bioreserches and SLR Consulting NZ on effects related to Te Ākau Bream Bay's:

- Coastal Processes and geomorphology
- Hydrology and surf breaks
- Water quality
- Seabed habitats
- Marine mammals

These scientific evaluations consistently identify that the effects of sand extraction on the Bay's biophysical environment and values would be of a **negligible to low order**, and could even result in a **net gain** (an improvement) in relation to 'marine debris' effects on marine mammals.

Finally, in relation to effects on associative values, including cultural associations with the Te Ākau Bream Bay's coastline and coastal marine environment, a review has been undertaken of documents prepared by local hapū which address that environment, including the *Patuharakeke Management Plan* (2014). In addition, *Sites of Significance to Māori*, that are identified in the Whangārei District Plan, have been visited in the course of this assessment, and a cultural induction, organised by Patuharakeke's Resource Management Unit, was undertaken on the 15th May 2024.

In response to these 'matters', it is considered that MBL's proposed sand extraction activities would remain quite isolated from the sites of significance identified in both the District Plan and *Patuharakeke Management Plan*, as well as in the course of the cultural induction, and the related effects identified in relation to these sites are of **low order**. Concerns also raised by iwi about the proposal's biophysical effects on landscape and natural character values have also been considered, but are addressed by the specialist assessments in that area described above, while separate Cultural Impact Assessments are also being prepared for MBL that will explore the issue of effects on local cultural values more directly.

On the basis of the assessment undertaken for MBL, it is therefore considered that the effects identified are typically of a **very low to low** order, and are consistent with relevant statutory instruments, including the Resource Management Act and the NZ Coastal Policy Statement.

Stephen Brown

BTP, Dip LA, FNZILA





Photo Locations:

- A Mair Road Beachfront Car Park (next to Photopoints 8 & 9)
- B Viewing Platform Next To Ruakaka Surf Life Saving Club (& Photopoint 33)
- C Uretiti Beach Camping Ground Beachfront (next to Photopoints 34 & 35)
- D Waipu Cove Beachfront (next to Photopoint 48)

All photos were taken with a Sony A7RV (full frame) camera and a 50mm (SLR equivalent) lens on the afternoon of the 15th May 2024 and the evening of the 16th May.

Figure 1: The William Fraser Photo Locations.



Figure 2: Location A (above) – Panorama of the *William Fraser* at the Mair Rd Beachfront Car Park.

Figure 2 comprises of a 50mm (SLR equivalent) photo taken with a Sony A7RV (full frame) camera at 1.58pm on the 16th May 2024. The panorama shows the *William Fraser* at Point (a) near the centre of the photo, together with a freighter at anchor to the right.



Figure 3: Location B (above) - Panorama of the *William Fraser* at the Ruakākā Surf Club Lookout.

Figure 3 comprises of a 50mm (SLR equivalent) photo taken with a Sony A7RV (full frame) camera at 2.47pm on the 16th May 2024. The panorama shows the *William Fraser* at Point (a) near the centre of the photo, together with a freighter at anchor to the right.



Figure 4: Location A (above) - the Mair Rd Beachfront Car Park.
Single-frame 50mm (SLR equivalent) photo taken with a Sony A7RV (full frame) camera at 1.58pm on the 16th May 2024 - showing the William Fraser at Point (a) in the centre of the photo and a freighter at anchor to the right.



Figure 5: Location B (above) - The Ruakākā Surf Club Lookout.

Single-frame 50mm (SLR equivalent) photo taken with a Sony A7RV (full frame) camera at 2.47pm on the 16th May 2024 - showing the William Fraser at Point (a) in the centre of the photo and a freighter at anchor to the right.



Figure 6: Location C (above) - Panorama of the *William Fraser* at the Uretiti Beachfront.

Figure 4 comprises of a 50mm (SLR equivalent) photo taken with a Sony A7RV (full frame) camera at 3.07pm on the 16th May 2024. The panorama shows the *William Fraser* at Point (a) near the centre of the photo, together with a freighter at anchor to the right.



Figure 7: Location D (above) - Panorama of the *William Fraser* at the Waipū Cove Beachfront Reserve.

Figure 5 comprises of a 50mm (SLR equivalent) photo taken with a Sony A7RV (full frame) camera at 2.47pm on the 16th May 2024. The panorama shows the *William Fraser* at Point (b) near the centre of the photo, together with a freighter moving towards Whangarei Harbour further to the left.



Figure 8: Location C - Uretiti Beachfront

Single-frame 50mm (SLR equivalent) photo taken with a Sony A7RV (full frame) camera at 3.07pm on the 16th May 2024 - showing the William Fraser at Point (a) in the centre of the photo.



Figure 9: Location D - Waipū Cove Beachfront Reserve

Single-frame 50mm (SLR equivalent) photo taken with a Sony A7RV (full frame) camera at 3.46pm on the 16th May 2024 - showing the William Fraser at Point (b) in the centre of the photo and a freighter moving towards Whangarei Harbour to the left.