

**Press release - 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

**The Whitianga Scallop Festival evolves sustainably**

There is currently a rāhui (no harvest) in place for the collection of scallops in the Opito Bay area, and elsewhere in New Zealand. The sustainability of scallops locally and nationally is a priority for Whitianga Scallop Festival Inc. In observing the need for the rāhui and the need to ensure the regeneration of scallops, the festival organisers will focus on offering a variety of seafood from New Zealand waters this year as the local scallop beds are left to rest.

This community event is in its sixteenth year and the festival has grown into one of New Zealand's iconic seafood/kaimoana, celebrations. And we do not expect that to change.

Set against the stunning backdrop of the Whitianga Harbour, the festival savours a range of New Zealand caught seafood, cooked in a myriad of different ways by renowned chefs, stall holders and local community groups. Complemented with an array of local and New Zealand beverages, festival goers will continue to be entertained by live bands, buskers, seafood cooking classes and more. Once again, we have a great line up of celebrity chefs. The live music lineup will see seven great bands across the main stage as well as the acoustic stage.

The organisers have evolved the festival branding to recognise the scallop we love and the need now to champion its cause, and the New Zealand caught seafood that will instead be enjoyed at this year's festival which will be called the Whitianga Oceans Festival - From Dock to Dish.

The drivers behind the seeking of the rāhui over the greater Mercury Bay being our local Iwi - Ngati Hei, Opito Bay Ratepayers Association as well as LegaSea are supportive of how the Whitianga Scallop Festival Incorporated Society has evolved.

The date for the now Whitianga Oceans Festival is **Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2021**. We hope our valued followers will embrace our reason for change and join us once again for what promises to be another fantastic event set against Whitianga's stunning Harbour.



We end with encouraging all to submit in support of the **“Proposed temporary closure of the eastern Coromandel coast to the harvest of scallops”** by emailing [FMSubmissions@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:FMSubmissions@mpi.govt.nz) **and then buy your tickets to our Whitianga Oceans Festival 2021 via our website** [www.oceansfestival.co.nz](http://www.oceansfestival.co.nz)

Ends.

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