



28 August 2023

News release

### **Waiheke Exotic Caulerpa - 4 weeks**

Tomorrow marks a month since the invasive Exotic Caulerpa seaweed was discovered near Thompson's Point on Waiheke's Northern coastline.

A Waiheke Marine Project (WMP) crew, which included Ngāti Paoa ki Waiheke (NPKW) and underwater drone operators Logan Marine, found the alarming examples during the 3rd of a survey series in late July.

A detailed Exotic Caulerpa update was presented to the community on Sunday 20th August at Piritahi Marae which was initially planned as a kōura/crayfish survey results release.

Since then a further 3 ROV survey days and two diver days have been completed as we begin to understand the extent of the area impacted.

A dive crew from the Pou Rāhui project of Ngāti Paoa Iwi Trust conducted several dives last week including conducting a treatment experiment on a small area west of Thompson's point

Ngāti Paoa Iwi Trust have laid a rāhui on Friday 25th August

MPI's contracted NIWA team are scheduled to return to Waiheke this week with a plan to continue the delimiting (finding the extremities) of Waiheke's exotic caulerpa infestation.

Biosecurity NZ have placed an informative video on the Fullers360 Waiheke ferry onboard screens.

A diverse group are working together to find a way to effectively combat exotic caulerpa around Waiheke. This includes and is not limited to; Ngāti Paoa, Waiheke Local Board, Auckland Council, Biosecurity NZ, Te Wero Nui and our wider community focused on caring for Tikapa Moana.

Further surveys, treatment options, signage, marker buoys and community engagement are planned - In the meantime WMP encourages the avoidance of the incursion area, particularly

with any activity that has seafloor contact such as fishing, anchoring and diving as this may dislodge small fragments.

Exotic Caulerpa competes with native species for light and takes over the home of other sea creatures leading to a loss of biodiversity and displacement. It spreads extremely easily with only the tiniest fragment being able to grow in its new location. The communities of Aotea Great Barrier, Ahu Ahu - Great Mercury, Te Kawau Tūmaro ō Toi - Kawau Island, and Omākiwi Cove in the Bay of Islands are all dealing with the unwanted arrival of exotic Caulerpa. Waiheke Island is showing that a deliberate surveillance programme is key to early detection and will help to get a head start on eradication.

If you think you've spotted Exotic Caulerpa, please note the location, take a photo and report it to Biosecurity New Zealand on 0800 80 99 66 or by completing the online reporting form at [report.mpi.govt.nz](http://report.mpi.govt.nz)

Please go to <https://www.waihekemarineproject.org/marinemonitoring> for more details.