Our Seas Project 1.2.1 Social Licence to Operate

Project Team

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Achieving and maintaining a social licence to operate – some New Zealand experience

James Baines
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Our focus



Conceptualising Social Licence to Operate (SLO)

Operations in the coastal marine environment

Emerging awareness and practice







First steps

Literature review – with coastal focus, mainly post 2000

My focus today – aquaculture experience

SLO – the concept

- ... an outcome
- ... of various **processes** ...
- ... from relationships between parties
- ... overlapping interests in contested public resources
- ... a hierarchy/spectrum of possible outcomes
- ... different perspectives

What does 'social licence' mean?

"an outcome from doing a whole lot of other things well and shouldn't be a goal in and of itself"

"a relationship which fosters mutual understanding and trust between operator and community of interest"

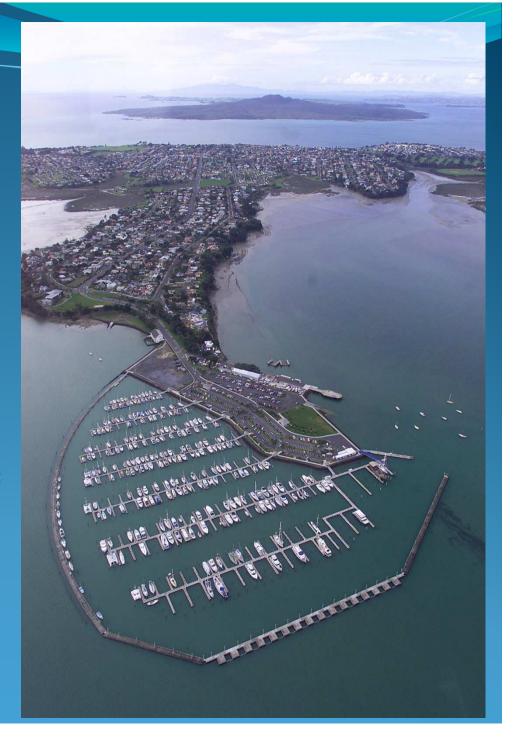
"a valuable asset ... and a fragile asset"

"a cost of doing business in a public space"

Who is involved? Company perspectives



Who is involved?
Community perspectives



Approaches to engagement?

Company practice

Large companies

Small companies

Approaches to engagement? Community suggestions

"have liaison groups for the different sectors of the aquaculture industry"

"Get a little focus group together and say 'how do we deal with this issue?""

"community reps on the senior exec team or at a board meeting"

"... real-time monitoring systems so we can go online, that'd be quite big news."

Factors most likely to influence success in SLO?

Company ownership: local, national, foreign?

Company (operational) scale: large or small - relationships – how personal? how many?

Company history – track record (legacy?)

Challenges to SLO? Community perspectives

Diversity of views and positions within a community

Some see bad in everything

Some unwilling to change a position

Keeping constituencies happy when they don't get all they wanted

The ethics of accepting \$\$ without checking alignment in values

Challenges to SLO? Company perspectives

Growth challenges community acceptance of status quo

Various "squeaky wheels"

Changes in community - new arrivals

Poor communication/inconsistent messages

Dealing with national advocacy groups – 'virtual community' – no personal relationship

Next steps

- Interviews with Māori and other enterprises, to document other experiences and perspectives
- Discourse analysis how the phrase 'social license' is being used in public statements and documents
- Case study survey to assess social license of a given company as perceived by its community(ies)