

An environment court decision in 2001, fought for a long time by FoGB and others, decreed mussel farms to be 3km offshore. At the time this case costing in the \$millions was the most expensive to date. We were justifiably proud of this outcome.

However, the mussel industry at that time argued the Wainui farms were necessary for spat catching, and the environment court Judge (Kenderdine), along with acceptance by the parties involved, allowed the farms to continue close to shore until the permits expired in 2012. With agreement, this was extended to 2024. Judge Kenderdine acknowledged Wainui Bay as an Outstanding landscape, which means it has National importance.

In 2016 many of the farms changed hands, resulting in a concentration of ownership and control. The remaining farmers then applied for a Plan change to make these farms an aquaculture management area, which was agreed to by TDC. This effectively excluded the very people who accepted an extension of permits in order to help the farmers, with the expectation they would be reconsidered in 2024, unable to challenge the right of the farms to be there after 2024. Hence we again appealed to the environment court to uphold their original decision that it would be reconsidered in 2024.

FoGB argument was basically around the premise that this Bay is outstanding and too valuable to be handed to the mussel industry if alternative methods of spat recruitment is available. Current research shows promise that this is well on the way. Our appeal was thankfully upheld by the environment court, and we are now in the position of waiting till 2024 to relook at these farms and assess their need to be in this beautiful place. Watch this space!