

## Key issues with seabed mining

- Seabed mining has been through an exhaustive evaluation in Aotearoa: Trans Tasman Resources (TTR) has twice applied for consent: the first time the EPA refused; the second it got consent but with 109 conditions.
- TTR's consent was then quashed by the High Court, the Court of Appeal and confirmed by the Supreme Court, which sent it back to the EPA for a reconsideration, where it said the company had to prove seabed mining would cause "no material harm"
- TTR had clearly decided it wouldn't meet this test, and after three days of hearings, pulled out of the 2024 EPA reconsideration process, and threw its hat into the fast-track process instead
- Nobody else on the planet has put seabed mining through its environmental paces like we have here: and it's been found wanting.
- In 2014 Chatham Rock Phosphate was refused consent to mine the deep seabed of the Chatham Rise for phosphate.

### Our Marine Environment is special

- The South Taranaki Bight is teeming with marine life, all of which would be negatively affected by seabed mining, potentially catastrophically
- It's home to a genetically unique population of "pygmy" blue whales, found nowhere else. They're already under stress from a warming climate
- Kororā, or little blue penguin, swim from the Marlborough Sounds to the Patea shoals to feed: the seabed mining would be right in their way

### The environmental impacts could be devastating

- Mining the seabed would send plumes of sediment to hang in the water column, threatening the food sources for the creatures living in the ocean. Dumping the majority of the material dug up back onto the seabed could create dead zones.
- Digging up 50 million tonnes of the seabed every year for 35 years in a 66 square km section of the South Taranaki Bight (and dumping 45 million tonnes a year back down onto the seabed) will create constant 24/7 noise that would likely impact the sensitive blue whales: experts say it could affect their weight, their ability to reproduce. The sediment plumes could also affect the movement of their food source: krill.
- The real risk is that seabed mining would likely result in severe and potentially irreversible damage to the marine ecosystems and biodiversity across an area much larger than the immediate mining site.
- The other risk is the precedent this could set: TTR's first application is for 66 square kms, but they've now had their mining permit extended by another 177 sq km. A decade ago the entire west coast of the North Island from Whangarei to Cape Reinga was under prospecting and exploration permits. Is this what the government is willing to unleash?

- CRP wants to mine in a benthic protected area. This is an ocean ecosystem rich with life and a breeding ground for fish stocks, it has endemic corals hundreds of years old and is a highly productive fisheries area. The phosphate nodules themselves provide important structure to the unique habitat and removing them would completely alter the habitat makeup. Again the plume would threaten the entire ecosystem for a large area. The phosphate it wants to mine might be free of the toxic mineral cadmium, but it contains radioactive polonium.

### **The economics are questionable**

- TTR is 100% Australian-owned company that has been making all kinds of promises about huge economic gain to Aotearoa, but has provided zero evidence to these claims, claims rejected by the EPA.
- The profits would go into the pockets of Australian shareholders
- TTR has said it would provide jobs from processing, but in all its evidence, it was clear that the ironsands would be transferred to ships at sea and go straight to Asian markets
- TTR would only pay 2.5% royalties on the iron ore
- TTR claims it would extract a critical mineral called Vanadium from the titanomagnetite (ironsands) but there is no process that does this. There's a Masters paper but nobody has tried this in practice - what we do know is that it's difficult. [Further reading on this - see [KASM blog on critical minerals](#)]
- CRP's economic value to the country is even more questionable.
- The economic value of Aotearoa's tourism and fishing industries, both of which rely on healthy marine ecosystems, should be prioritised over profits for an Australian company.
- Fishing industry (commercial & recreational) are strongly opposed to seabed mining.

### **We want our politicians to protect our oceans for future generations**

- We love our marine environment
- Massive open-cast mines in our ocean are offensive in every way - take seabed mining off the fast-track list!
- Seabed mining is the worst type of extraction with toxic waste material from mining indiscriminately dumped into the marine environment, causing known and unknown impacts downstream.
- Fast tracking seabed mining falls short of national and international obligations.
- Aotearoa values our coastal cultural heritage; Maori and Pakeha initially arrived here on the ocean
- NZers choose to live close to the ocean, we are drawn to it: it feeds us, it sustains us, we feel it, we are connected to it, inextricably

**Email or Print out the [KASM submission against the Fast Track](#) to give to MPs**