

**What if?
Future Seas Scenario Planning and the
Establishment of a Marine Reserve
Network**



One of the most difficult tasks for planners is to get beyond the issues of the day and really plan for the future. A number of tools are around, but rarely do we find readily accessible well-explained examples of thinking 50 years ahead. On June 6th the

WWF published "What if?" which uses a scenario planning method to try to understand how the biological, social, economic, and cultural aspects of the marine environment in New Zealand will change over the next 50 years, how it will be protected and used, and the role that a marine reserve network should play in that process. This is a timely publication in light of the recent announcement of proposals for marine reserves on the West Coast and the message

from the Minister for the Environment that the long delayed marine protection legislation will progress in this term of government. The publication is readable and accessible and hard wearing, and contains very useful well-referenced information on a range of marine planning matters. It is a good source book. The effectiveness of the approach, facilitated by *URS New Zealand*, will depend in part on what one's expectations are. As a participant in some of the scenario building processes, I have found the presentation quite interesting and the process helped to stimulate my thinking through the knowledge gained from experts in areas of the marine environment with which I was less familiar. It is also pertinent to note that the work was largely done in 2006/07. One scenario successfully conjectures the economic collapse that apparently blind-sided politicians, business and planners alike. Coastal and marine planners, especially those in environmental planning, should get hold of this for its direct relevance. Other planners may find the scenarios very useful to read in a more generic sense – hopefully it will get the creative juices flowing.

Full reference: WWF-New Zealand (2009). *What if? Future Seas: Scenario Planning and the Establishment of a Marine Reserve Network* Wellington: WWF-New Zealand. 63p. http://wwf.org.nz/media_centre/publications/?1460/Future-Seas-Scenario-Planning-and-the-Establishment-of-a-Marine-Reserve-Network