

## Press release from the Cluster Maritime de Polynésie and the Syndicat Tai Moana

### Yachting in French Polynesia: Situation update

#### **New structures and regulations are in progress to support the growth of sailing in French Polynesia:**

In order to support the growth of recreational sailing, yachting professionals and the French Polynesian Administration are working on new infrastructure and regulations to improve services available to sailors in French Polynesia. **The objective is to create dedicated long-term mooring zones in high density areas. Note that until such time as mooring buoys are installed, temporary mooring on anchor remains allowed.**

Tai Moana, the Association of Yachting Professionals and the Maritime Cluster of French Polynesia have reviewed the new proposed structures and regulations **in order to help sailors and charter clients around the world understand how this might affect their stay in French Polynesia.**

Over the past 10 years French Polynesia has experienced a strong and continuous growth of the charter industry and international cruising, which has brought very positive economic benefits even in the most remote islands. **The increase in the number of yachts sailing through Polynesia requires new infrastructures and better regulations.**

Efforts will be focused first on the high flow areas where pressures on the existing infrastructure is the strongest. Over time, structures will be rolled out to more of French Polynesia's 118 islands.

**During the COVID pandemic, while all countries and islands around the Pacific Ocean closed their borders, French Polynesia has allowed all yachts at sea to enter its waters and find not only sheltered anchorages but also the warm Polynesia welcome.** For example, the local populations of Nuku Hiva and Hiva Oa in the Marquesas islands delivered fresh food, free of charge, to all the sailors that were confined on their yachts.

As a result, French Polynesia has welcomed a large number of sailboats, and many who were hoping to keep on sailing have been detained due to continued border closures in countries further west. Note that not a single yacht has been denied the right to stop in French Polynesia to rest, provision, refuel and sail in the 5 archipelagoes.

**Some tensions have arisen in the areas where the authorities requested international yachts to gather for safety and sanitary reasons, but this situation will not last long.**

In a recent interview, Mrs Rocheteau the Head of the French Polynesian Maritime Affairs Department, described the new mooring regulations on the island of Tahiti in the urban area between Faa'a and Punaauia. She based her speech on the **Public Domain code of French Polynesia** that dates from 2004 and encompasses all public domains: maritime, terrestrial, aerial. All public domains cannot be occupied other than temporarily and with a specific authorization.

These Public Domain rules date back to the Napoleon Code of 1804. **A short occupation that does not disturb others, the environment or public works is always allowed and will stay allowed as regards to mooring on anchor.**

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French Polynesia's government with all interested parties and local municipalities has started to implement new regulations, prioritizing first the islands where the number of cruising yachts is the largest. **The regulations therefore apply to Bora Bora and the urban area of Tahiti between Punaauia and Faa'a where mooring zones have been defined. Sailors are now allowed to stay in these areas safely and legally.**

Work on this subject continues and must take into account all different usages of the lagoon and the protection of the environment.

Our Professional Association strongly supports this growth policy would like to see new infrastructure and equipment put in place across the whole of French Polynesia and particularly in the higher density areas, for example: **eco-friendly moorings, yacht services, garbage collection.** Some of these services are already in effect, and others need to be put into place over time. We consider that yacht services should be developed all around Polynesia to limit the need for extended stops around the urban area of Papeete/Tahiti.

French Polynesia has one of the largest maritime areas of the world and work is in progress in some of the main islands: Tahiti, Moorea, Bora Bora, Huahine, Fakarava, Aratika, Kauehi, Niau, Raraka, Taiaro and Toau. **In all our other islands, where the number of yachts is smaller there are no specific moorings regulation.** Obviously, the Public Domain code applies and long stays or installing your own mooring requires an authorization. **Mooring on your anchor for a short period is allowed** provided you respect the restrictions described on the official navigation chart to protect the eco systems.

**We are convinced that yachting and cruising bring economic benefits to our country and all its different archipelagoes,** allowing the local population to develop new services and create local business activities while protecting the environment, the beauty of the lagoon and their fishing resources. New technology can help to better manage, communicate and ultimately share these resources more effectively.

This is particularly valid during this crisis. While the different and sometimes conflicting interests of local sailors, international sailors, charter companies and seashore residents has been evident due to the rapid increase in the number of yachts in Polynesia, we consider that genuine dialog is key to a mutually beneficial development.

Let us work hard with all interested parties to create long lasting and environmentally friendly solutions.

Tai Moana Association  
Its Presidente



Maritime Cluster of French Polynesia  
Its President

