

Minister and mayor discuss the issues

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by Mike Dinsdale

Whangarei's two most powerful politicians officially met for the first time on Friday for a coffee and chat over issues important to the district and Northland as a whole.

Whangarei MP and Cabinet minister Phil Heatley had his first official monthly meeting with new Whangarei Mayor Morris Cutforth at a Town Basin cafe on Friday afternoon.

Mr Heatley, Minister of Housing and Fisheries, has been meeting Whangarei's mayor since he was first elected and has held the discussions with previous district leaders Craig Brown, Pamela Peters, Stan Semenov and now Mr Cutforth.

He said the meeting was to discuss issues of relevance and to catch up with what was happening in Whangarei from the mayor's point of view.

"It's to let each other know



CHINWAG: Whangarei MP and Cabinet minister Phil Heatley and new Whangarei Mayor Morris Cutforth caught up for their first official monthly meeting on Friday.
PICTURE / MICHAEL CUNNINGHAM

what the other is doing and to discuss important issues affecting

Whangarei and Northland. It doesn't mean we always agree, but

it's important we know what we are both doing," Mr Heatley said.

"I've always respected the office of mayor and the Northland Regional Council chairman and it's so important for me to stay in touch with both of them."

Mr Cutforth said as a Cabinet minister Mr Heatley held sway and, as Minister of Fisheries, he was discussing issues on marine reserves. There is a proposal to set up a marine park along a stretch of Whangarei's coastline.

"We can't be having the second best coastline in the world at Tutukaka and do nothing about it," Mr Cutforth said.

He said he was filling Mr Heatley in on what his council's direction for the district was, "but also the hopes and aspirations of Northland. We have some real issues up here.

"And as Minister of Fisheries I hope he can tell me where the best fishing spots are," Mr Cutforth said.