



# THE UPDATE

Captain's Blog



## The \$75 million question - has the *Tokatu* investment paid off?

There was a lot riding on Sealord's new vessel *Tokatu* and a shaky start led to anxious months as teething problems were rectified.

However, the verdict is in and, to a collective exhaling of breath, the answer seems to be a resounding yes. And, for a number of reasons.

Speaking at the Maori Fisheries Conference on Wednesday Sealord general manager, group operations, Doug Paulin had just announced that, in a new agreement, 37 iwi groups will share 60 percent of their annual catch entitlements with the company.

Sealord is half owned by Māori, however this deal will see all its vessels catching more iwi quota and returning 80 percent of the profits to iwi. *Tokatu*, the most advanced and biggest by tonnage vessel in the New Zealand fleet, is pivotal to the success of that deal.

The on-the-water performance has been impressive. Paulin said the *Tokatu's* ability to tow in big seas is unbeatable. She can comfortably fish in 14 metre waves, something no other vessel in New Zealand is capable of. Even the Ukrainian BATM vessels, which are longer than *Tokatu*, run for cover in those types of conditions.

Paulin has always said that the biggest benefit is the vessel's ability to catch all the species Sealord has in its quota portfolio, unlike other vessels such as the *Rehua* which can only catch hoki, ling and a few other bycatch species.

This means Sealord can lower the cost for catching. *Rehua* in the off season might only be getting 8-10 tonnes a day when the *Tokatu* would just turn around and target another quota species, which *Rehua* cannot catch.

However, Paulin said it meant the skippers were now having to catch in fisheries where they had little experience - fisheries traditionally targeted by their Russian and Ukrainian crewed vessels. While initially confident they could do anything, the Russians could do it was soon apparent that the kiwi skippers on the *Tokatu* were significantly lacking that expertise.

Sealord asked for help from its Russian friends and they now have a trawl master and a fishing master on board to support the kiwi skippers and crew - a move that has significantly improved the catch.

The *Tokatu's* stated ability to freeze over 85 product weight tonne a day was always its greatest benefit. That meant, depending on the species, a total catch of 100-150 tonnes of fish a day. However, that lofty aim hit an early snag.

Paulin said that was one of the worst issues of a few they discovered with the vessel on arrival and again as they tested her. He said at one point they thought they would have to reduce the volume down to 50 product weight tonnes because of the clear and worrying inefficiencies of the freezers.

The reason for the freezer inefficiency was something of a shock but the solution turned out to be simple. Turns out the Norwegian shipyard had turned off all the main ammonia pipes to the freezer and only the bypass valve was working. Once the main valves were turned on and the bypass valve was turned off capacity went up 45 percent.

The *Tokatu* is now out-fishing the BATMs and the freezers are humming.

Paulin is confident that the *Tokatu* will pay significant dividends through to iwi as a shareholder and that will be cause for celebration for the 37 iwi who now have more skin in the Sealord game.

Rex Chapman the *Tokatu's* skipper, said that in his 35 years at sea he has never been on a vessel with her seagoing abilities. One of the crew remarked that 40 knots is the new 20 knots - meaning they don't even notice it. Rex said on his latest trip he was still fishing in 80 knots, with 14 metre seas.

The only complaint Rex has is he reckons Sealord need another two of her.

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## New Zealand Seafood Industry Conference and Technical Day

### Registrations open

Registrations for the 2019 New Zealand Seafood Industry Conference and Technical Day are now open.

This year the conference will move to New Zealand's tourism capital Queenstown, with the technical day taking place on Thursday 8 August and the conference on Friday 9 August.

The theme for this year's seafood conference is Blue Growth – Charting Seafood's Future, looking at how one of New Zealand's key primary sectors can best position itself for future growth and success.

We have a great array of speakers and details of the full programme will be available soon on the Seafood New Zealand website [www.seafood.co.nz/conference-2019](http://www.seafood.co.nz/conference-2019).

Seafood New Zealand has negotiated accommodation rates at the conference venue and neighbouring hotels. Details are on the [Information](#) page of the website along with links to Air New Zealand for group flight bookings.

Get in quick to secure accommodation and flights at reasonable prices.

[Register now](#)

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### Responsible fishers in progress

More than 30 of Moana's commercial fishers attended a workshop in Whangarei last week, where they were shown the ropes for Geographic Position Reporting (GPR) and Electronic Reporting (ER) systems.

The Responsible Fishers Programme is a Moana initiative that seeks to equip fishers with the latest information and connect them with industry experts to discuss industry issues.

It's part of the company's responsibility of ensuring fishers, contractors or otherwise, are living by the value of kaitiakitanga, said Moana chief executive Steve Tarrant.

"By bringing industry experts into the communities of our contract fishers we can facilitate healthy discussion on industry issues and how we can tackle these positively and collaboratively."

Sixty contract fishers took part in round two of the programme last year, which focused on fisheries management, compliance and health and safety. Terra Moana was enlisted to provide guidance on sustainability and Guard Safety joined the programme to ensure the training reflected current industry and environmental requirements.

This year, Fisheries Inshore New Zealand (FINZ), Seafood Innovations Ltd. (SIL) and Moana collaborated to prep contract fishers for the planned switch from paper reporting to electronic reporting – a system that's hoped to streamline the supply, monitoring and assessment of data, according to MPI.

Trident Systems and FishServe Innovations New Zealand were on hand to discuss the benefits of ER and GPR and later the new app 'Deckhand.nz' was explained.

Fishers will also participate in a research trial ahead of the statutory ER data reporting date.

Moana's quota and resource manager Nathan Reid said these innovations will support the industry's future-focused approach.

"Switching to electronic reporting will not only help in the data collection process, but also provide an easy means for fishers to record their catches.

"Alongside historical knowledge about vessel handling and valuable fishing experience, constant innovation and change are required to ensure we honour our promises to be sustainable for future generations.

"That's why Moana New Zealand is committed to helping and guiding contract fishers through this process of change to make it as smooth as possible."

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## Fish with a serving of te reo

Christchurch seafood outlet [Fush](#) is never short of business. Their slogan 'Real fish & chips, real Kiwi kai' has culminated in a popular menu of fresh ika (fish), soft shell crab, cajun-style fish and more.

Now restaurateurs Maia, Anton and Jessica Matthews are preparing to plate up te reo Maori through a series of lessons in nine towns across the South Island.

The Matthews trialed several free classes last year, which soon outgrew the little Fush shop. Classes ballooned to more than 600 students, requiring a change in location.

"We were so astounded to get such a positive response that it's prompted us to take our kaupapa (initiative) around Te Waipounamu," Anton said.

"There are young, there are old, there are sometimes babies and there are 90-year-olds. They are Maori, they are Pakeha, they are tourists. The crowds are always a mix, it's like a fruit salad, and it's awesome to see."

All the lessons are free of charge, suitable for beginners and aim to build speaking confidence to a level where te reo can be incorporated into everyday language.

"We'll teach practical language, words like 'homai' which means 'pass me'. It will be a very practical approach and we'll teach people words they can use immediately."

Several staff be travelling with the Matthews, along with their kitchen caravan that will serve up their popular fish and chips at the sessions.

Several pop-up restaurants have been organized too, giving each town's locals the opportunity to try some of the seafood fare from Fush.

The tour kicks-off in Greymouth on April 1, followed by Westport, Nelson, Blenheim, Kaikoura, Timaru, Ashburton, Dunedin and Queenstown.



Fush co-owner Anton Matthews.



A Fush dish - Greenshell mussel seafood paella.

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## MSC Scholarship Research Programme 2019

[Applications](#) are now open for the 2019 Marine Stewardship Council Scholarship Research Programme.

The programme is open to undergraduate and postgraduate students worldwide who are studying fisheries science and management or supply chain traceability.

Five scholarships, valued at approximately \$8000 per student, are awarded each year for travel and other support.

[To qualify](#), projects must focus on an environmental improvement, performance or best practice in fisheries management, or seafood product traceability and supply chain management.

[Applications](#) close on April 7, 2019 (UK time).



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## News

A deepwater deal between Nelson-based Sealord and 37 iwi groups is a “watershed moment” for Maori fisheries, according to an industry leader, *Stuff* reported. The Nga Tapuwae o Maui agreement was signed on Tuesday and will provide Nelson-based Sealord access to the annual catch entitlement of 37 of the country’s iwi groups. The deal is expected to increase efficiencies and return more than 80 percent of profits to iwi. Sixty percent of iwi quota will be held in deepwater fisheries, including hoki, orange roughy, jack mackerel and silver warehou – which will be caught on Sealord vessels. General manager of operations Doug Paulin said the signing was the culmination of more than two years’ discussions and would provide stability for the company’s operations. Paulin said it was possible a second new vessel could be commissioned too, which would drop the company’s costs per kilo. “What it allows us to do is have confidence in investing in our fleet and now we’ve got a reasonable idea of the scale of what our operations will be.” Training and employment for iwi members will also be provided from the agreement. “I see it as a chance for iwi to actually start gaining some of those things that were thought of when the Maori fisheries settlement was enacted - it doesn't really mean how big or small you are, any iwi is welcome to join and get the same return. We’re ensuring all are involved in how we go about fishing and they’re exposed to the risk, because if Sealord doesn’t fish well then that impacts the profits. To all intents and purposes, we would see it as a contract in perpetuity.” The company is already fishing under the new arrangement.

Fisheries New Zealand has announced changes to the catch limits of sea cucumber and rock lobster (crayfish) fish stocks in three areas across New Zealand. Completed as part of the latest sustainability round, the changes will come into effect on April 1. Of the four stocks reviewed, two will have catch limits increased, one stock will decrease and the other

will remain the same. Changes have been made to Total Allowable Catch and Total Allowable Commercial Catch limits for three of the stocks. The southern rock lobster fishery (CRA 8) is doing well, allowing for an increase in the amount of commercial catch that can be taken. The commercial catch for the Gisborne rock lobster fishery (CRA 3) has been reduced to keep the stock sustainable, whereas catch settings for the Wellington and Hawke's Bay rock lobster fishery (CRA 4) will remain the same. Sea cucumber, at the top of the South Island (SCC 7A), was also reviewed and has been increased.

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