



THE UPDATE

Captain's Blog

Oceans and Fisheries - what the new portfolio offers industry

Labour's landslide election victory gave them a strong mandate to govern alone, which they have chosen to do, leaving the Greens outside of Cabinet.

However, it is not surprising that, with a strong environmental focus of their own, they have widened the fisheries portfolio.

The industry's new Minister, David Parker, will preside over a new portfolio and be the Minister for Oceans and Fisheries. He also holds the Environment and Revenue portfolios and is Attorney General and Associate Minister of Finance.

This is a weighty load but one that a capable Minister such as Parker is well equipped to handle.

Combining Oceans with Fisheries is perhaps a natural fit. Without a healthy ocean there is not a healthy fishery. However, it's unclear what this change will look like under the new government. We would welcome a more integrated approach and the industry will continue work to improve its environmental performance. All we ask is that decisions are made on sound policy and good science.

The industry is already making great strides in matters that cross into non-fishery issues concerning the ocean, including plastic reduction.

It is also already feeling the effect on its business of climate change and warming waters.

Addressing the health of the ocean is essential to the future of fishing and the continuation of a secure, sustainable food supply and export earner.

Ocean plastics, warming waters and the acidification of our seas are all real and tangible threats that we are as vested in improving as anyone else.

We already have a world class fisheries management regime and we would welcome discussion on how that may be improved further. Issues such as discarding, 28N rights, and cameras have been going on too long and we are as anxious as the government to resolve these quickly.

So, we welcome David Parker and look forward to forging a strong and respectful relationship over the next three years.

We also wish former Minister Stuart Nash well in his new portfolios.

He was a good friend to the industry. He genuinely listened to its concerns and went into bat for us when he thought it was right.

Fisheries is a complex portfolio, something those in MPI understand well.

The industry has a good relationship with its regulator and with its Director General Ray Smith.

Open communication between the industry and government is essential.

We welcome that continuing.

Remembering John Reid

The Industry was saddened to hear of the passing of John Reid last week - a long standing supporter and advocate for the NZ fishing industry.

Originally an MPI Fisheries Officer, John went on to form his own business and became well known to fishing companies and fishermen throughout the country as he travelled and delivered compliance training courses.

John ran a well-respected, industry initiated Observer Services programme and was often seen supporting his wife Pat with regional fisheries management issues.

John eventually stepped into a similar role as he took up the reins of the Challenger Scallop Enhancement Co. Ltd, managing everything from company administration, fishermen's liaison, compliance programmes and government engagement.

Both John and Pat were strong Federation supporters and attended their annual conference each year, always participating and enjoying socialising with the fishermen.

John will be a sad loss to the industry. We extend our sympathy and deepest condolences to Pat and the family.

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CONTACT

Email info@seafood.org.nz

Phone [+64 4 385 4005](tel:+6443854005)

Physical address

Level 6

Eagle Technology House

135 Victoria Street

Wellington 6011

New Zealand